Potts, Thomas

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TRIAL

OF

JENNET PRESTON, OF GISBORNE, IN CRAVEN,

AT THE

YORK ASSIZES,

JULY, 1612;

FOR PRACTISING DEVILISH AND WICKED ARTS CALLED WITCHCRAFT.

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THE

ARRAIGNEMENT

AND TRIALL OF

JENNET PRESTON, OF

GISBORNE IN CRAVEN,

In the County of Yorke.

At the Assizes and General Goale

Delivery holden in the Castle of Yorke.

In the Countie of Yorke, the xxij. day of July last past, *Anno Regni Regis* JACOBI *Angliæ, &c., Decimo, and Scotiæ quadragessimo quinto*

BEFORE

Sir JAMES ALTHAM *Knight, one*

Of the Barons of his Majesties Court of Exchequer;

And SIR EDWARD BROMLEY Knight another of

The Barons of his Majesties Court of Exchequer;

His Majesties Justices of Assize, Oyer and Terminer

And General Goale Deliverie, in the Circuit

of the North Parts.

LONDON:

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ARRAIGNMENT

AND TRIALL OF JENNET PRESTON,

Of Gisborne, in Craven, in the Countie of Yorke, at the Assizes and General Gaole Delivery, holden at the Castle of Yorke, in the Countie of Yorke, the seven and twentieth day of July last past, Anno Regni Regis Jacobi, Angliæ &c. Decimo & Scotiæ xlvj.

Jennet Preston.

Many have undertaken to write great discourses of Witches and many more dispute and speake of them. And it were not much if as many wrote of them as could write at al, to set forth to the world the particular Rites and Secrets of their unlawful Artes, with their infinite and wonderfull practises which many men little feare till they seaze upon them. As by this late wonderfull discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster may appeare, wherein I find such apparant matter to satisfie the world, how dangerous and malitious a Witch this *Jennet Preston* was, How unfit to live, having once so great mercie extended to her: And againe to revive her practises,

and returne to her former course of life; that I thinke it necessary not to let the memorie of her life and death die with her; But to place her next to her fellowes and to set forth the Arraignement Triall and Conviction of her, with her offences for which she was condemned and executed.

And although shee died for her offence before the rest, I yet can afford her no better place than in the end of this Booke in respect the proceedings was in another Countie;

You that were husband to this *Jennet Preston*; her friends and kinsfolkes, who have not beene sparing to devise so scandalous a slander out of the malice of your hearts, as that she was maliciously prosecuted by Master *Lister* and others; Her life unjustly taken away by practise; and that (even at the Gallowes where she died impenitent and void of all feare or grace) she died an innocent woman, because she would confesse nothing: You I say may not hold it strange, though at this time, being not only moved in conscience, but directed, for example sake, with that which I have to report of her, I suffer you not to wander any further; but with this short discourse oppose your idle conceipts able to seduce others: And by charmes of imputations and slander, laid upon the Justice of the Land, to clear her that was justly condemned and executed for her offence; That this Jennet Preston was for many yeares well thought of and esteemed by Master *Lister* who afterwards died for it Had accesse

to his house, kind respect and entertainment; nothing denied her she stood in need of. Which of you that dwelleth near them in Craven but can and will witnesse it? which might have encouraged a woman of any good condition to have run a better course.

The favour and goodnesse of this Gentleman Master *Lister* now living, at his first entrance after the death of his Father extended towards her, and the reliefe she had at all times, with many other favours that succeeded from time to time, are so palpable and evident to all men as no man can denie them. These were sufficient motives to have perswaded her from the murder of so good a friend.

But such was her execrable Ingratitude, as even this grace and goodnesse was the cause of his miserable and untimely death. And even in the beginning of his greatest favours extended to her, began shee to work this mischiefe, according to the course of all Witches.

This *Jennet Preston*, whose arraignement and Triall, with the particular evidence against her I am now to set forth unto you, one that lived at Gisborne in Craven, in the Countie of Yorke, neare Master *Lister* of Westbie, against whom she practised such mischiefe; for having cut off *Thomas Lister* Esquire, father to this Gentleman now living, she revenged herself upon his sonne; who in short time received great losse in his goods and Cattel by her meanes.

These things in time did beget suspition, and at the

Assizes and Generall Gaole delivery holden at the Castle of Yorke in Lent last past, before my Lord *Bromley*, shee was indicted and arraigned for the murder of a child of one *Dodg-sonnes*, but by the favour and mercifull consideration of the Jurie thereof acquited.

But the favour and mercie was no sooner extended towardes her, and shee set at libertie, But shee began to practise the utter ruine and overthrow of the name and blood of this Gentleman.

And the better to execute her mischiefe and wicked intent, within foure dayes after her deliverance out of the Castle at Yorke, went to the great Assembly of Witches at *Malking Tower* upon Good-Friday last: to pray aide and helpe, for the murder of Master *Lister*, in respect he had prosecuted against her at the same assizes.

Which it pleased God in his mercie to discover, and in the end, howsoever he had blinded her, as he did the King of Ægypt and his instruments, for the brighter evidence of his own powerfull glory; Yet by a Judicial course and triall of the Law, cut her off, and so delivered his people from the danger of her Devilish and wicked practises: which you shall heare against her, at her, arraignement and Triall, which I shall now set forth to you in order as it was performed, with the wonderfull signes and tokens of God, to satisfie the Jurie to find her guiltie of this bloudie murther, committed foure yeares since.

Indictment.

This *Jennet Preston* being prisoner in the Castle at Yorke, and indicted, for that shee felloniously had practised, used, and exercised divers wicked and devilish arts, called Witchcrafts, Inchantments, Charmes, and Sorceries, in and upon one *Thomas Lister* of Westby in Craven, in the Countie of Yorke Esquire, And by force of the same witchcraft felloniously the said *Thomas* Lister had killed, *Contra Pacem* &c, being at the Barre, was arraigned.

To this Indictment upon her Arraignment, shee pleaded not guiltie, and for the triall of her life put herselfe upon God and her Country.

Whereupon my Lord *Altham* commanded Master Sherriffe of the Countie of Yorke, in open Court to return a Jurie of sufficient Gentlemen of understanding, to passe betweene our Sovereigne Lord the Kings Majestie and her, and others the prisoners, upon their lives and deaths; who were afterwards sworne, according to the forme and order of the Court, the prisoner being admitted to her lawfull challenge.

Which being done, and the Prisoner at the Barre to receive her Triall, Master *Heyber*, one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace in the same Countie, having taken great paines in the proceedings against her; and being best instructed of any man of all the particular points of evidence against her, humbly prayed, the witnesses hereafter following might be examined against her, and the

several Examinations, taken before Master *Nowel*, and certified, might openly be published against her; which hereafter follow in order, *viz.*

The Evidence for the Kings Majestie
Against Jennet Preston, Prisoner at the Barre.

Hereupon were diverse Examinations taken and read openly against her, to induce and satisfie the Gentlemen of the Jurie of Life and Death, to find she was a Witch; and many other circumstances for the death of M *Lister.* In the end *Anne Robinson* and others were both examined, who upon their Oaths declared against her, That M *Lister* lying in great extremitie, upon his death-bedde, cried out unto them that stood about him; that *Jennet Preston* was in the House, look where she is, take holde of her; for Gods sake shut the doors, and take her, shee cannot escape away. Look about for her, and lay hold of her, for she is in the house: and so cried very often in his great paines, to them that came to visit him during his sicknesse.

Anne Robinson, and *Thomas Lister*

Being examined further, they both gave this in evidence against her, that when Master *Lister* lay upon his death-bedde, hee cried out in great extremitie; *Jennet Preston* lays heavy upon me, *Preston's* wife lays heavy upon me; helpe me, helpe me: and so departed, crying out against her.

These, with many other witnesses, were further ex-

amined, and deposed, That *Jennet Preston*, the Prisoner at the Barre, being brought to M. *Lister* after he was dead, and layed out to be wound up in his winding-sheet, the said *Jennet Preston* comming to touch the dead corpse, they bled fresh bloud presently, in the presence of all that were then present: which hath ever been held a great argument to induce a Jurie to hold him guiltie that shall be accused of murther, and hath seldome or never, fayled in the Tryall.

But these were not alone; for this wicked and bloud-thirstie Witch was no sooner delivered at the Assizes holden at Yorke in Lent last past, being indicted, arraigned and by the favour and mercie of the Jurie found not guiltie, for the Murther of a Child by Witchcraft; but upon the Friday following, being Good-Friday, shee rode in hast to the great meeting at *Malking-Tower*, and there prayed aide for the murther of M. *Thomas Lister*: as at large shall appeare, by the severall Examinations hereafter following; sent to these assizes from Master *Nowel* and others his Majesties Justices of the Peace in the Countie of Lancaster, to be given in Evidence against her, upon her Triall, viz.

The Examination and Evidence of JAMES DEVICE, *of the Forrest of Pendle, in the Countie of Lancaster, Labourer, taken at the House of* JAMES WILSEY, *of the Forrest of Pendle in the Countie of Lancaster, the seven and twentieth day of Aprill*, Anno. Reg. Regis

JACOBI Angliæ, &c Decimo ac Scotiæ quadragessimo quinto.

Before

ROGER NOWEL *and* NICHOLAS BANESTER, *Esquires, two of his Majesties Justices of the Peace within the Countie of Lancaster*, viz.

This Examinate saith, That upon Good-Friday last about twelve of the clock in the day time, there dined in this Examinates said mothers house a number of persons, whereof three were men, with this Examinate, and the rest women; and that they met there for these three causes following (as this Examinates said Mother told this Examinate): First was for the naming of the Spirit, which *Alizon Device*, now Prisoner at Lancaster, had, but did not name him, because shee was not there. The second cause was for the deliverie of his said Grandmother, this Examinates said sister *Alizon*, the said *Anne Chattox*, and her daughter *Redferne*, killing the Gaoler at Lancaster; and before the next Assizes to blow up the Castle there; to that end the aforesaid Prisoners might by that means make an escape and get away. All which this Examinate then heard them conferre of. And the third cause was, for that there was a woman dwelling in Gisborne Parish, who came into this Examinates said Grand-mothers house, who there came, and craved assistance of the rest of them that were then there, for the killing of Master *Lister* of Westby; because, as she then

said, he had borne malice unto her, and had thought to have her put away at the late Assizes at Yorke; but could not. And then this Examinat heard the woman say, that her power was not strong enough to doe it her selfe, being now lesse than before-time it had beene.

And he also further saith, That the said *Prestons* wife had a Spirit with her like unto a white Foale, with a blacke-spot on the forehead. And further, this Examinat saith, that since the said meeting, as aforesaid, this Examinat hath beene brought to the wife of one *Preston* in Gisburne Parish aforesaid, by *Henry Hargreives* of Goldshey, to see whether shee was the woman that came among the said Witches, on the saide last Good-Friday, to crave their aide and assistance for killing the saide Master *Lister:* and having had full view of her; hee this Examinate confesseth, That shee was the selfe-same woman which came among the said Witches on the said last Good-Friday, for their aide for the killing of the said Master *Lister*; and that brought the Spirit with her, in the shape of a white Foale, as aforesaid.

And this Examinate further saith, That all the said Witches went out of the said house in their own shapes and likenesses, and they all, by that they were forth of the doores, were gotten on horse-backe like unto Foales, some of one colour, some of another, and *Prestons* wife was the last; and when she got on horse-backe, they all presently vanished out of this Examinates sight: and

before their said parting away, they all appointed to meete at the said *Prestons* wifes house that day twelve-month; at which time the said *Prestons* wife promised to make them a great feast; and if they had occasion to meete in the meane time, then should warning be given that they all should meete upon Romles-moore. And this Examinate further saith, That at the said feast at Malking Tower, this Examinate heard all give their consents to put the said Master *Thomas Lister* of Westby to death: and after Master *Lister* should be made away by witchcraft, then all the said Witches gave their consents to joyne altogether to hancke Master *Leonard Lister*, when he should come to dwell at the Sowgill, and so put him to death.

The Examination of HENRIE HARGREIVES *of Goldshey-booth, in the Forrest of Pendle, in the Countie of Lancaster Yeoman, taken the fifth day of May,* Anno Reg. Regis Jacobi Angliæ, &c. Decimo, ac Scociæ quadragessimo quinto.

Before

ROGER NOWEL, NICHOLAS BANNESTER *and* ROBERT HOLDEN, Esquires; *three of his Majesties Justices of the Peace within the said Countie.*

This Examinat upon his Oath saith, That *Anne Whittle*, alias *Chattox*, confessed unto him, that she knoweth one *Preston's* wife neere Gisburne, and that the said *Prestons* wife should have beene at the said feast, upon

the said Good-Friday, and that she was an ill woman, and had done Master *Lister* of Westby, great hurt.

The Examination of ELIZABETH DEVICE *mother of* JAMES DEVICE, *taken before* ROGER NOWEL *and* NICHOLAS BANESTER, *Esquires, the day and yeere aforesaid*, viz.

The said *Elizabeth Device* upon her Examination confesseth, That upon Good-Friday last, there dined at this Examinates house, which shee hath said are Witches, and doth verily thinke them to be Witches; and their names are those whom *James Device* hath formerly spoken of to be there.

She also confesseth in all things touching the killing of Master Lister of Westby, as the said *James Device* hath before confessed.

And the said *Elizabeth Device* also further saith, That at the said meeting at Malking-Tower, as aforesaid, the said *Katharine Hewyt* and *John Bulcock*, with all the rest then there, gave their consents, with the said *Prestons* wife, for the killing of the said Master *Lister*. And for the killing of the said Master *Leonard Lister*, she this Examinate saith in all things, as the said *James Device* hath before confessed in his Examination.

The Examination of JENNET DEVICE, *daughter of* ELIZABETH *late wife of* JOHN DEVICE, *of the Forrest of Pendle, in the Countie of Lancaster, about the age of*

nine yeares or thereabouts, taken the day and yeare above said:

Before

ROGER NOWEL *and* NICHOLAS BANESTER, *Esquires, two of his Majesties Justices of the Peace in the Countie of Lancaster.*

The said Examinate upon her examination saith, that upon Good-Friday last there were about twenty persons, whereof only two were men, to this Examinates remembrance, at her said Grand-mothers house, called Malking-Tower aforesaid, about twelve of the clocke: all which persons, this Examinats said Mother told her were Witches, and that she knoweth the names of divers of the said Witches.

After all these Examinations, Confessions, and Evidence, delivered in open Court against her, his Lordship commanded the Jurie to observe the particular circumstances, first, Master *Lister* in his extremitie, to complaine hee saw her, and requested them that were by him to lay hold on her.

After he cried out, shee lay heavie upon him even at the time of his death.

But the conclusion is of more consequence than all the rest, that *Jennet Preston* being brought to the dead corps, they bled freshly, And after her deliverence in Lent, it was proved she rode upon a white Foal, and was present in the great assembly at Malkin-Tower with the Witches,

to intreate and pray for aide of them, to kill Master *Lister*, now living, for that he had prosequuted against her.

And against these people you may not expect such direct evidence, since all their workes are the workes of darknesse, no witnesses are present to accuse them, therefore I pray God direct your consiences.

After the Gentlemen of the Jurie of Life and Death had spent the most part of the day, in consideration of the evidence against her, they returned into Court and delivered up their Verdict of Life and Death.

The Verdict of Life and Death.

Who found *Jennet Preston* guiltie of the fellonie and murder by Witch-craft of *Thomas Lister*, Esquire; contayned in the Indictment against her, &c.

Afterwards, according to the course and order of the Lawes, his Lordship pronounced Judgement against her to bee hanged for her offence.

And so the Court arose.

Here was the wonderful discoverie of this *Jennet Preston*, who for so many yeares had lived at Gisburn in Craven, neare Master *Lister*: one thing more I shall add to all these Examinations, and Evidence of witnesses, which I saw, and was present in the Court at Lancaster, when it was done at the Assizes holden in August following.

My *Lord Bromley* being very suspicious of the accusation of *Jennet Device*, the little wench, commanded her to look upon the prisoners, that were present, and declare

which of them were present at *Malkin-Tower*, at the great assembly of Witches on Good-Friday last: shee looked upon and tooke many by the handes, and accused them to be there, and when shee had accused all that were there present, shee told his Lordship there was a woman that came out of Craven that was amongst the Witches at that feast, but shee saw her not among the Prisoners at the Barre.

What a singular note was this of a Child, amongst many to misse her, that before that time was hanged for her offence, which shee would never confesse or declare at her death? here was present old *Preston* her husband, who then cried out and went away: being fully satisfied his wife had Justice, and was worthie of death.

To conclude then this present discourse, I heartilie desire you, my loving friends and Countrie-men, for whose particular instructions this is added to the former of the wonderfull discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster: And for whose particular satisfaction this is published; Awake in time, and suffer not yourselves to be thus assaulted.

Consider how barbarously this Gentleman hath been dealt withal; and especially you that hereafter shall passe upon any Juries of Life and Death; let not your connivence, or rather foolish pittie, spare such as these, to exequute farther mischiefe.

Remember that shee was no sooner set at libertie, but

shee plotted the ruine and overthrow of this Gentleman, and his whole Familie.

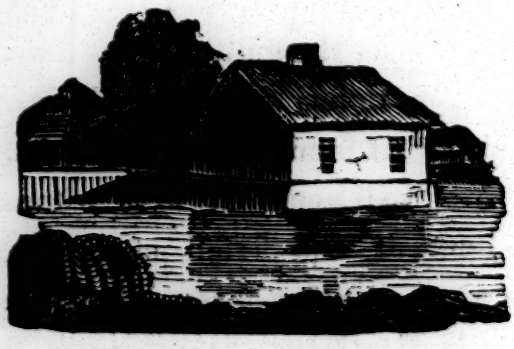
Expect not, as this reverend and learned Judge saith, such apparent proofe against them, as against others, since all their workes, are the workes of darknesse: and unlesse it please Almightie God to raise witnesses to accuse them, who is able to condemne them?

Forget not the bloud that cries out unto God for revenge, bring it not upon your own heads.

Neither do I urge this any further, then with this, that I would alwaies entreat you to remember, that it is as great a crime (as *Soloman* sayth, *Prov.* 17.) to condemne the innocent, as to let the guiltie escape free.

Looke not upon things strangely alledged, but judiciously consider what is proved against them.

And that as well all you that were witnesses, present at the Arraignment and Triall of her, as all other strangers, to whom this discourse shall come, may take example by this Gentleman to prosecute these Hellish Furies to their end: labor to root them out of the Commonwealth, for the Common good of your Countrey. The greatest mercie extended to them is soone forgotten.

God graunt us the long and prosperous continuance of these Honourable and Reverend Judges, under whose government we live in these North parts: for we may say, that God Almightie hath singled them out, and set them on his seat, for the Defence of Justice.

And for this great deliverance, let us pray to God Almightie, that the memorie of these worthie Judges may bee blessed to all posterities.